

2.4.5 Soil Conditioning and Mulching

- A. A minimum of 3 inches of organic mulch shall be added in non-turf areas to the soil surface after planting.
- B. Non-porous material such as sheet plastic shall not be placed under the mulch.
- C. A minimum of 6" permeable soil, native or imported and meeting the requirements of Standard Specification 601S, shall be required for turf and landscaped areas.
- D. Tree planting areas are to be provided with a minimum of 12 inches of friable native loam soil meeting the requirements of Standard Specification 601S. Planting in relatively undisturbed existing native soils is encouraged. Soil to a minimum depth of 12 inches is required within the entire landscape median or peninsula. All other planting areas must have a minimum soil depth of 12 inches within a radius of six feet from the tree trunk. Trees are not to be planted in caliche, solid rock, or, in soils whose texture has been compacted by construction equipment. Areas of compaction which have been subsequently amended with 12 inches of friable native soil are suitable for planting.

2.4.5.1 Aggregate Soil Cover

A. § 25-2-1003 (D) of the Land Development Code allows a required landscape area to include aggregate if inorganic materials do not predominate over the plants. For the purposes of this requirement, the following describes criteria for use of aggregate in a required landscape area.

- 1) Aggregate may not be used in place of soil as a planting medium when the proposed use is in a planting bed.
- 2) Aggregate may be used as a soil cover only if the following requirements are met.
 - a. The aggregate does not exceed 20% of the required landscape area.
 - b. Placement is limited to the street yard and non-street yard parking islands and medians, and in areas of complete shade from buildings.
 - c. Placement is limited to slopes less than 2% to prevent erosion; rock should be sized appropriately for slope to provide erosion control.
 - d. The aggregate is used in conjunction with a minimum 6" soil base; the aggregate may not exceed 3" in depth.
 - e. Aggregate use does not functionally increase impervious cover on the site, this can be achieved by using washed and screened materials to prevent compaction and filling of pore spaces.
 - f. Aggregate size is greater than the No. 4 Sieve (4.75mm), smaller aggregate contains 'fines' and constitutes impervious cover.

- g. No less than 50% of the aggregate area must be shaded with plant canopies at the time of installation. Areas to be shaded by new plantings should be measured using a percentage of the bed coverage of the mature plant or within 1-2 years growth.
 - h. Polypropylene and non-porous based weed barrier is not used.
 - i. If irrigation is used in a planting bed, irrigation is limited to drip irrigation only.
 - j. Installation must be installed to prevent migration of the aggregate over time.
- 3) Nothing in this rule obviates the need to comply with the tree planting standards and existing tree protection requirements found in:
- a. Standards Manual-Figure 3-14 Tree Planting Detail, and
 - b. Environmental Criteria Manual P-6 Remedial Tree Care.

2.7.0 HILL COUNTRY ROADWAY LANDSCAPE CRITERIA

2.7.1 Introduction

In addition to the basic landscape requirements, sites located along Hill Country roadways must adhere to additional landscape provisions developed to preserve the unique scenic character of the Hill Country. The following design criteria supplements the code language and quantitatively presents the requirements.

2.7.2 Design Criteria

A. Tree Preservation.

The tree preservation requirements associated with Hill Country roadway sites is discussed in detail in the "Tree and Natural Area Preservation" section of this manual (see [Section 3](#)).

B. Landscape Area/Preservation of Natural Area.

1. Forty Percent Natural Area.

Forty percent of the site must remain undisturbed, in substantially the same condition as existed prior to its development (natural state as defined in the [Glossary](#)). The extent of the natural area to be preserved will be delineated on plan by the construction limit line. The square footage (along with percentages) of the required and actual natural area of the site to be kept must be noted in the calculations (see Appendix B).

2. Nondeveloped Areas.

All areas of the site which have not been developed (prior to the effective date of the code provisions or preceding ordinances) may count toward this requirement. This would allow areas previously cleared for ranching, farming, for lawns or gardening, to be counted as natural areas. However, these areas must be seeded with native grasses and wildflowers and allowed to revegetate to a natural condition (see Appendix A for specific restoration criteria). The establishment of a mix of woody plants within these areas by the planting of seeds or seedlings will lessen the time required for natural restoration and is strongly encouraged.

3. Previously Developed Areas.

Areas of the site which have been developed (prior to the effective date of the ordinance or preceding ordinances) may be used to count toward this requirement if the areas are substantially revegetated with native trees, shrubs and grasses, according to restoration criteria (see Appendix A). Such restored areas must be noted within the Hill Country calculations. Show location, size and species of these plants on all landscape working plans. The determination of density requirements for trees and shrubs (high, medium or low) will be verified by the Planning and Development Review Department after analysis of the existing natural vegetation remaining on the site or on nearby sites.

4. Preservation Priority.

In all cases, priority should be given to the preservation of areas existing in a natural state rather than the restoration of disturbed areas.

5. Location of Natural Areas.

All natural areas, in order to be counted toward the 40 percent requirement, must be outside the proposed construction limit line. Placement of this line (even within medians or the highway buffer) is subject to all criteria outlined in Section 2.7.2 F, "Protection of Natural Areas."

6. Departure from Requirement.

Any departure from the 40 percent area requirement would require a waiver, which must be approved by the Planning Commission and City Council. The evaluation of waiver requests will be based on the adherence to the waiver provisions of the Code, especially those related to environmental protection and aesthetic enhancement.

7. Sewage Disposal Fields.

No more than a quarter of the total required natural area (40 percent of the site) can be disturbed in any way to install sewage disposal fields (wastewater drainfields).

Disturbance would include the maximum area required for the field itself plus any adjacent area which needs to be disturbed in any way for construction access, utility line access or other installation requirements.

8. Revegetation of Sewage Disposal Fields.

Revegetation of disposal field areas must be done according to the restoration criteria in Appendix A. Show location, size and species of these plants on all landscape working plans. The determination of density requirements for trees and shrubs (high, medium or low) will be verified by the Planning and Development Review Department after analysis of the natural vegetation existing on the site.

Placement of sewage disposal fields within the natural area should achieve the following objectives (in descending order of importance):

- Minimum encroachment on natural critical areas.
- Minimum removal of surveyed trees.
- Suitability for engineering needs. (For example, when a certain area is the only location for a disposal field.)
- Placement where least visible from adjacent roadways.

9. Planting Details.

Any new planting must comply with general landscape requirements for ECM 2.4.5 Soil Conditioning and Mulching. Aggregate may not be used as a soil cover.